

## THE MAIN COURSE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ILKHANATE RULER MAHMUD GHAZAN KHAN

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**Abstract.** The reign of Ghazan Khan (1295-1304) occupies an important place in the history of the Ilkhanid dynasty. The religious and other socio-economic reforms, he carried out, changed the nature of the state, which was reflected in foreign policy. Despite the fact that he was a Muslim and used the name of the Prophet Mahmud, his foreign policy continued the traditional path of the Ilkhans before him, which is clearly reflected in the sources. Thus, like his non-Muslim predecessors, he continued his wars with the Mamluks of Egypt and the Ulus of Jochi for economic interests and the mission of leading the Muslim world, and did not stop the traditional diplomatic correspondence with the Christian Western world. Although he refused titles and attributes, which were considered formal signs of submission to the Supreme Mongol Khan, he paid attention to maintaining relations with Beijing at the economic level, but serious conflicts with his other relatives, the Jaghatai, over Khorasan were inevitable. Based on the primary sources of the period and the modern researcher works, the article comprehensively re-examines the main directions of the foreign policy of the period of Mahmud Ghazan Khan, "Padishah-e Islam".

**Keywords:** *Mongol, Ghazan Khan, Foreign Policy, Mamluk, Jochi, Jaghatai, Byzantium*

### INTRODUCTION

The complete establishment of Mongol power in the Middle East and the formation of a new state of the Ilkhan ulus was the result of the military campaign of Hulagu Khan (1260-1265), sent by order of the great kagan Mongke (1251-1259). If we focus on the history of the Ilkhan dynasty, which ruled the region for about a century, the reign of Ghazan Khan (1295-1304) is undoubtedly of great importance, who Islamized and transformed the state from a nomadic to a settled way of life. Historical works began to be written about Gazan Khan during his lifetime. Important measures taken by Ghazan Khan during his nine-year reign, especially his reforms in various directions are still the subject of scholarly study.

Although the reforms and all the measures of Ghazan Khan to strengthen the central power have become the object of extensive studies from different perspectives, his foreign policy remains a topic that has received less attention and in most cases has not been studied in detail. This paper aims to consider some aspects of the foreign policy of Mahmud Ghazan Khan on the basis of primary sources of that period and modern historiography. One of the objectives of the study is to find out the connection between the internal measures of Ghazan Khan and his foreign policy.

Ghazan Khan, who took the throne of the Ilkhanids in 1295, faced a critically complex set of socio-economic and political problems of the state. To bring the state out of this crisis, the Ilkhan began to carry out radical reforms, firstly converting to Islam in order to rise in the eyes of the majority Muslim subjects and to gain the support of the local aristocracy. It should be noted that in modern historiography there is also an opposite opinion that Ghazan Khan never accepted Islam. [Biran, Michal (2016): 79].

Without disputing any of the opinions for and against the fact that Ghazan Khan converted to Islam or not, it can be stated with certainty that he used Islam to spread and strengthen his power. Some historians claim that his religious policy is related to the foreign policy as well, besides above-mentioned reasons [Melville (1990): 159-177]. By accepting the name "*Padishah-e Islam*", he had a claim to lead the entire Muslim world.

### Relations with the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt

Ghazan Khan wanted to take away the caliphate mission of the Egyptian Mamluk sultanate, his eternal enemy. It is known that Hulagu Khan's intention to invade Egypt when he entered the Middle East geography brought the Mongols into conflict with the Muslim Mamluk sultanate of Egypt. The conflict between the two states was always a priority in the foreign policy of the Ilkhans until Ghazan Khan, however most of their military operations against Egypt were not successful.

The fact that Ghazan Khan became a Muslim did not bring expected positive change in the policy of the Mongols against the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt, their main enemy in the region. On the contrary, Ghazan Khan who as mentioned before claimed to accept himself as the leader not only of the Mongols who became Muslims, but also of the entire Islamic world, began to conduct a more active policy against the Mamluks. Based on the Arab chronicles and diplomatic correspondence of the time, Denis Aigle point out that, by accepting the title of "*Padishah-e Islam*" Ghazan Khan intended to disguise his invasion plan with religious legitimacy during his march on the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt [Denise (2007): 92]. The author's opinion is confirmed by the information contained in *Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh's* work *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. So, that, Rashīd al-Dīn states about the purpose of Ghazan Khan's military expedition to Syria in 1299. He describes that, as a just Islamic ruler, Ghazan Khan aimed to put an end to the actions of the Mamluk army, such as selling Muslim women as slaves during their marauding marches on Mardin, as well as the soldiers' immorality by drinking wine [Rashīd al-Dīn (1994): 1289-1290]. However, some of the scholars rightly consider the position of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh, one of the viziers of the Ilkhanate, as an attempt to give religious legitimacy to the cause of Ghazan Khan's invasion [Erdem (2000): 25].

According to another essential Persian source of the period *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, H. Howards, derives that after his accession to the throne Ghazan Khan wrote a letter to the Sultan of Egypt. In his letter Ghazan Khan notifies that he had already accepted Islam and thus the religious conflict between the two parties had been resolved, but he claims that Mamluk dynasty has no legitimate right to rule and therefore advises them to submit to the Mongols who have world dominion. Henry Howorth notes that Ghazan Khan campaigned against Egypt based on the illegitimacy of the Mamluk dynasty [Howorth (1880): 435]. However, Robert Irvin, who approached the issue from a different

perspective, thinks that one of the reasons for the hope of the Mongols to reoccupy Syria was the internal political unrest in the Mamluk Sultanate [Irwin (1986): 99]. Undoubtedly, we can also note, in addition to the mentioned reasons, that ilkhan's intention to invade Egypt was related to the factor of the realization the mission given to the previous ilkhans, which was the idea of world domination of the Mongols. In addition, after the fall of the Abbasids, the desire to achieve the main religious legitimate leadership of the Islamic world - the *ummah*, and the intention to turn the Muslims here into their subjects can also be counted among the goals of the Mongol invasion of these territories. However, the economic importance of the region at this time, especially the fact that it was the route of trade and caravan routes, cannot be ruled out.

Georgians and Armenians, which were traditional allies of the Mongols in this region, showed particular effort in the war of Ghazan Khan against the Mamluks of Egypt. According to the sources, in addition to the Anatolian Seljuk forces and Georgians, 10,000 Armenian troops under the leadership of the Cilicia Armenian king Hetum II participated in the 90,000-strong Mongol army [Galstyan (2005): 60-61, 173]. On December 22, 1299, in the battle of *Wadi al-Khaznadar* (in some sources, *Majma al-Muruj*) near Homs, the Mongols won a battle against the forces of the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate for the first time [Irwin (1986): 100]. Although this victory gave the Mongol army hope to restore the image of invincibility and fighting spirit, which they had lost in the battle of *Ain Jalut* (1260), following events showed that it would not be possible to turn this into real political results. Most Armenian and Georgian chroniclers overdraw the victory of *Wadi al-Khaznadar* and exaggerate the role of Armenian-Georgian troops in the victory [Galstyan (2005): 153; Kartlis Tskhovreba (2014): 390]. However, major researchers explain the reason for the victory differently, for instance Denis Aigle point out that Ghazan Khan won the victory thanks to Seyfeddin Kipchak al-Mansuri, a Mamluk emir who escaped from the Mamluk sultanate and took refuge in the Ilkhanid state [Denise (2014): 256]. Also, recent studies suggest that Ghazan Khan achieved victory thanks to the reforms he implemented in the army, especially by using heavily armed infantry alongside with traditional light cavalry [Martinez (1986): 176-177, Sykes P.M (1921): 189, Uyar (2007): 3526]. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh narrate that when the battle started, Ghazan Khan ordered the Mongol cavalymen to dismount and fight on foot. [Rashiduddin, (1998): 646]. In fact, a different method of fighting chosen by traditional light cavalry Mongols created confusion in the Mamluk army and this was the main reason for their defeat. This serious alteration in the army can be considered a clear sign that the Mongols have already mastered the traditional heavy infantry battle tactics of the Middle East.

After the battle, the Mongols besieged and conquered first the city of Homs, and then Damascus without any resistance. On January 8, 1300, a *Friday Khutbah* was delivered in the name of Ghazan Khan in the Damascus mosque [The Cambridge History of Iran (1968): 388]. On February 5, 1300, after appointing Gutlughshah Noyan and the fugitive Mamluk emir Seyfeddin Lachi as the governor to the conquered territories, Ghazan Khan returned to the city of Damascus. J.A. Boyle and D. Morgan explain his return with the beginning of attacks by the Qara'unas (or *Neguders*) forces in Southern Iran [The Cambridge History of Iran (1968): 388]. H. Howorth finds it unconvincing that *Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh* associated Ghazan Khan's retreat with hot weather, because it occurred

in February. Based on Hayton, H. Howorth associates the withdrawal of the Mongols from Syria with the Chagatai raids that violated the eastern borders of the state [Howorth (1880): 446]. D. Morgan also connects Ghazan Khan's retreat with the Chagatai, but at the same time he assumes that the Ilkhanid army retreated because of the lack of pastures for their horses in Syria [Morgan (1988): 74]. After the return of Ghazan Khan from Syria, the treacherous Mamluk emirs who previously turned to the Mongol side began to violate their promises and made peace with the Mamluk sultan again. The Ilkhanate emirs, who were appointed as governors to Damascus, were troubled by the news of the Mamluk attack and had to leave Syria.

Ghazan Khan's next campaign to Syria started from the city of Tabriz in the fall of 1300. According to the sources, despite the conquest of several areas in Syria, this military campaign failed due to heavy rains [İbn Tagriberdi (2013): 102-103; Rashiduddin (1998): 649; Irwin (1986): 101]. While Ghazan Khan was in Sinjar, he sent a diplomatic mission to the Sultan of Mamluk in order to regulate the relations. In his book, Ibn Tagriverdi gave the text of the letter presented by the envoys to the Sultan. In the letter, written in Mongolian on paper produced in Baghdad, Ghazan Khan relates the robbery and oppression of the Muslim community in Mardin as the main reason for his first campaign. He notifies that his army won the battle with the help of God. He also wrote that in order to improve welfare of the population again and restore the movement of merchants from both sides, both Muslim rulers must continue their relations in peaceful conditions [İbn Tagriberdi (2013): 105-106]. However, Denis Aigle, who conducted research on the Mongolian text of the letter and the Arabic translation text in the Mamluk sources, points out that Ghazan Khan attempted to show himself in a superior position over the Mamluk sultan using of critical and threatening manner [Denise (2014): 266-268]. Mamluk sultan al-Malik Nasir Muhammad (1299-1309), who well understood the Ilkhanate ruler's intention to present himself as the protector and leader of the Islamic Ummah, wrote a reply letter in almost the same essence and style and sent it to the Mongol court. However, both sides' inclination towards peace resulted in calming the tense political situation, albeit temporarily.

Nevertheless, the desire of the Mongols to possess lands as far as Egypt caused Ghazan Khan to make a final campaign in this direction. According to B. Shpuler, there emerged favorable political conditions for Ghazan Khan to go on his third military campaign to Egypt. Relations with the Chagatai in the east and the Ulus of Jochi (Golden Horde) in the north were already settled. As well as, taking advantage of the young age of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik Nasir Muhammad, the influential Turkmen emirs, named Baybars al-Jashngir and Sayf al-Din Salar, interfered in his actions, which caused political instability in the administration. Before starting the war with the Mamluks, Ghazan Khan sent a new delegation to Egypt in order to win some time. In the letter that the envoys delivered to Cairo on August 27, 1302, Ilkhan demanded the submission of the Mamluk sultan, the annual tribute, and minting of his name on coins, otherwise the Sultan was threatened to suffer the same fate as Sultan Muhammad, the ruler of Khwarazmshah [Bertold (2011): 114, Özgüdenli (2009): 212]. The ultimatum letter was answered in the same tone by the Mamluk sultan. On January 30, 1303, Ilkhanid army crossed the Euphrates River from Hilla and started the third Mamluk campaign. [Howorth (1880): 465]. The Mongol army under the leadership of Gutlughshah Noyan,

Amir Choban and Mulay camped in Raqqa and then marched on Aleppo from here. The Mongols suffered a crushing defeat under the leadership of Gutlughshah Noyan in the battle that took place at a place called Shaqhab or Marj al-Saffar. The Mamluk side was successful as a result of the effective battle tactics under the command of Sultan al-Malik Nasir Muhammad and his experienced generals Sayf al-Din Salar, Baybars al-Jashngir, Hussam al-Din Lajin, Baybars al-Mansoori and as well as Ibn Taymiyyah's religious-ideological propaganda in the army. As a result of the battle, the Mamluk Sultanate established its dominance in Syria. In addition, the Armenians, who were vassals of the Ilkhanate, accepted the Mamluk rule and began to pay the annual tribute [Bertold (2011): 115-116].

The consequences of the battle for the Ilkhanate, and especially the influence on Ghazan Khan, are overdrawn in most Arabic sources. According to the sources, the outcome of the battle had such a negative impact that it led to Ghazan Khan's death. It should be noted that in the sources of the period, Ghazan Khan's Mamluk policy was seen differently in the initial periods when he came to power, especially taking into account the effect of his conversion to Islam, but later events showed that he had distinct ambitions in this matter. Despite a positive relation towards the Mamluks in the initial negotiations, it is clear that he still was devoted to the ideology of world domination, left by his ancestor Genghis Khan. The Mamluk sultan's suspicion of Ghazan Khan's intentions is also confirmed in later events. As a result, it was not possible to fully realize the intention to conquer the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt during the reign of Ghazan Khan, as it was during the rule of the previous Ilkhans.

### **Relations with Ulus of Jochi (Golden Horde)**

As we know Genghis Khan divided his empire, which is called "*Yeke Moğol Ulusu*" in the Chinese sources, into *ulus* (state, country) among his sons, and determined a share of land from the occupied territories within the certain borders for each of them. However, the fact that some territories were not completely occupied during the partition and fell under the Mongol rule after Genghis Khan's death, caused disputes between the states (*ulus*) in the later period. This territorial dispute occurred between the eldest (aka) and youngest (ini) sons of Genghis Khan, among the states (*ulus*) created by their successors, the Golden Horde (or *Jochi Ulus*), and the Ilkhanate. It is clear from the notes of the researchers, who tried to investigate the root and reasons of the dispute by using resources available in different languages of the time, that the cause of the dispute was mainly related to economic resources [Ализаде (2012): 323-356, Камалов (2007): 75-80]. The historical Azerbaijan, which located at the point where the east and the west meet, where the main trade and caravan routes pass, was a favorable strategic point desired by both Mongol states. Undoubtedly, the main reason of misunderstanding was Azerbaijan [Yakubovski (1976): 58]. Both states (*ulus*) well understood the importance of Azerbaijan's rich natural resources, fertile meadows and winter pastures, as well as its importance as a center for controlling the occupied territories, covering the territories from Darbend to Hamadan.

This long and hard conflict over Azerbaijan brought two Mongol empires against each other, and even caused wars over this claim for more than a century. Undoubtedly,

both states have suffered socio-economically from these severe conflicts. The Arabic author Ibn Wasil writes that when Berke Khan of Golden Horde saw the terrible struggle that took place on the battlefield, he said “May God shame Hulagu, who killed the Mongol with the sword of the Mongol. If we were united, we could conquer the whole earth” [Tiesenhausen (1941): 153, Yakubovski (1976): 59]. It should be noted that the serious consequences of these bloody wars fell on the population of the region, especially Derbend and Shirvan, and a large number of people were killed, and the cities and agriculture were damaged. The campaigns of the Jochi ulus to the region ended in defeat in most of the battles that took place before the accession of Ghazan Khan. However, Ilkhanate rulers have always focused on the forthcoming threat from the region and adjusted their foreign policy course to take it into account.

Ghazan Khan’s accession to the throne and his conversion to Islam created hope for the Muslim Golden Horde khans to realize their traditional territorial claims. However, before moving on to the steps taken to realize these claims, it is necessary to pay attention to the events that took place within the Jochi ulus in order to better understand the processes at the time when Ghazan Khan came to power. After the death of Möngke Temür (1266-1280), there was a political instability in the Golden Horde ulus. Thus, during the reigns of Töde Möngke (1280-1287) and Töle Buqa (1287-1290), who replaced each other in a short period of time, the central administrative apparatus was weakened and influential nomadic Mongol noyans, especially Nogai, acted independently. As a result of the measures taken by the influential emir Nogai, who concentrated almost all the power in his hand, Töle Buqa was assassinated and replaced by Tokhta Khan (1290-1312). However, it should be noted that at the age of nine, Tokhta, who was declared the khan of Jochi ulus by Nogai Khan, was under his influence for some time. However, upon reaching a certain age, the deterioration of relations with Nogai led to the murder of the latter. The initial relations between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde during the time of Ghazan Khan, coincidence with the political instability that occurred in the Jochi ulus. According to the sources of the time, Nogai Khan had secret relations with the Ilkhanate regarding Tokhta’s attitude towards him. Even after Nogai’s murder, his wife Chubei Khatun and his eldest son Torai took refuge in the state of Ilkhanate and asked for help from Ghazan Khan to take revenge on Tokhta [Rashīd al-Dīn (1994): 748]. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh states:

*“Ghazan Khan said it is far from bravery not to keep one’s word when relations are bad. Craft and deception are considered wrong in Sharia and Law. Although we have friendship with Nogai, we will not interfere between two people. Taking advantage in bad times is not a good feature for great kings.”* [Rashiduddin (1998): 336].

After elimination of Nogai in 1301, Tokhta Khan, who gained full power in the Golden Horde ulus, stabilized the state’s internal situation, and then began to become active in foreign policy. According to B. Shpuler’s research, Tokhta initiated an invasion in 1301 through the Derbend pass, a key point between the two empires. This initiative, which was easily prevented, resulted in the submission of several Lezgi emirs to Ghazan Khan [Bertold (2011): 113]. In 1302, Tokhta Khan sent envoys to Ghazan Khan to demand their inherited territories. Information about the purpose and activities of the mission staff has been written by the Persian and Arabic authors. Tokhta Khan’s envoys consisted of 350 people, according to “Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf” and 300 people based on Rashīd

al-Dīn Faḍlullāh's record [Ayati (1993): 240, Rashīd al-Dīn (1994): 1309]. Even Ghazan Khan, who was angry with the large number of envoys, said:

*"If the envoys came to receive their inheritance, their number should have been more, if they came just as envoys, it would have been enough to have 5 people. Why should the expenses of these people from Darband to Hilla be a burden on my subject?"*[Ayati (1993): 240].

The Arabic author al-Omari noted that the envoys sent to Ghazan Khan said: "These are the places, conquered by the sword of our ancestors. It is our inheritance from them and it is our right. Give us our rights". In return, Mahmud Ghazan Khan responded: "I did not get these lands by inheritance, but by the sword. Tabriz and Maragha are among the places that I took by the sword and joined to my country. In this matter, there is nothing between you and me but the sword" [Tiesenhausen (1941): 385].

It is mentioned in the sources that the envoys of Tokhta Khan symbolically scattered a bag of millet on the ground to show the large number of the Golden Horde's army. Ghazan Khan ordered some hens to be brought and after the hens ate the millet in a short time, he told the envoys: "It is known to Tokhta that a hen enjoys millet, a hunting bird enjoys a flock of pigeons, and a wolf is happy with a large flock of sheep" [Özgüdenli (2009): 163; Камалов (2007): 69].

Tokhta Khan intended to take advantage of Ghazan Khan's unsuccessful campaign to Egypt and take back Azerbaijan peacefully. Tokhta Khan's intention was severely answered by Ilkhan and remained without result. However, it is clear from the sources, that despite the harsh rejection to the envoys of the Golden Horde, Ghazan Khan did not allow the relations to deteriorate. According to "Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf", on December 31, 1302, during the celebration, organized on the occasion of the traditional Mongolian New Day (Novruz) holiday, precious stones were granted in return for 21 hunting birds brought by the envoys of Golden Horde [Ayati (1993): 242]. The sources suggests that the rulers of the Golden Horde, inspired by the crisis of power that arose during the Ghazan Khan's rise to power and the fact that the new ilkhan was a Muslim, brought up the issue of traditional territory claim again, however their efforts were in vain. It should also be noted that despite being a Muslim, Ghazan Khan, who was distinguished by his loyalty to the laws and customs of his ancestors, managed to diplomatically prevent the territorial claims of the Golden Horde.

### **Relations with the Chagataids**

As in the west, the Ilkhanate also had strategic interests in the east and rivals who trampled on those interests with marauding expeditions whenever possible. Thus, even during the division of the empire by Genghis Khan, the lands belonging to the eastern part of the Ilkhanate, especially Khorasan province, which had particularly favorable natural geographical conditions, caused conflicts with the Jagatais. During the time of the Ilkhans, who ruled before Ghazan Khan, the Jaghatai forces staged marauding raids in the area, but these raids were repulsed. A number of aggressive border violations launched by the ruler of Jagatais, Duva Khan (1277-1307) towards Khorasan during the reign of Ghazan Khan were recorded in the sources. Unlike the previous Chagatai rulers, Duva Khan, who pursued a more active policy, began to act more independently after the death

of the Great Mongol Khan Kublai (1294), and even subdued the Ogedeis, whose he was subject once. Thus, as a result of his determined position, the Chagatai Khanate became more powerful and its influence increased in the territories of Afghanistan. Taking advantage of the internal struggle in the Ilkhanate state, Duva Khan started a raid in the direction of Khorasan and Mazandaran with the combined forces of Ogedeis' crown prince Sarban and Juji Ghasar's successor Ebuge. According to M. Biran's researches, Duva Khan stayed in Mazandaran for eight months, and on his way back, he plundered a large number of cities in Khorasan and Mazandaran. He even tried to convince the governor of Herat to take his side by promising him half of Khorasan, but the latter preferred to report this matter to Amir Nowruz [Biran (1997): 59].

According to the information given by Rashiduddin, Ghazan Khan, who heard about this attack, consulted with his emirs and sent an army to Khorasan under the command of Emir Nowruz and Prince Suka [Rashīd al-Dīn (1994): 1291-1292]. However, Prince Suka, who was in the army, and a number of his followers plotted against Emir Nowruz. As a result of their intention being revealed, a number of treacherous emirs, including Suka, were killed by Nowruz. B. Spuler mentions his patronage of Muslims and the desire of the emirs to remain faithful to their previous religious beliefs (Buddhism and Christianity) among the reasons for the hostility of the revolted emirs to Nowruz [Bertold (2011): 107]. As for the attack of Jagatai army, Duva Khan besieged and plundered the cities of Kusui and Fushank in the south of Herat, but he returned to Mawarunnahr after receiving the news of the Ilkhanid army's approach. Taking Ghazan Khan's campaign to Syria as an opportunity, Duva Khan appointed his son Gutluq Goja as the leader of the Karauna forces who were subordinates of the Jagatais and sent them on raids against Ilkhanid cities in the direction of Khorasan in 1298-1299. Jagatai forces plundered the cities of Balkh, Sistan and Marv, and in 1300 advanced to the Fars province and besieged the city of Shiraz. However, they were unable to take the city and advanced towards Kazuran, they did not succeed here as well and besieged the city of Hormuz. They returned to their country with the loot they captured, encountering serious resistance from the ruler of the city, Baha ad-Din Ayaz.

The next campaign of Jagatais to Khorasan took place in 1302. According to "Jāmi' al-tawārikh", the Mongol envoy, named Armeni Bala brought information to Ghazan Khan, who was on his next campaign to Syria, that the 3-4 thousand enemy forces crossed the border, but they were repulsed by Oljaytu Khan, governor of Khorasan [Özgüdenli (2009): 222]. M. Biran notes that, in 1302 Kaidu Khan sent an army under command of his son Sarban to help the Jagatais, but bad weather prevented the unification of the armies of the Jagatais and Ogedeis [Biran (1997): 60]. As mentioned, the Jagatai troops, having left alone, were repelled by Oljaytu Khan. The death of Ogedei's khan Kaiudu in March of 1303 created favorable conditions for the Ilkhanate. Inasmuch as, when the Jagatais were carrying out campaigns on Khorasan, the khans of the Ogedey house not only supported them, even encouraged them. However, it should be mentioned that Ghazan Khan, who was mainly involved in the struggle with the Egyptian Mamluks in the west of the country, and partly with the Jochi Ulus in the northern borders, managed to control the raids, carried out by the Jagatays in Khorasan, even if it's from a distance. Particularly, like the previous ilkhans his appointment of his brother and heir Oljaytu as a



governor here, should be considered as an important step to ensure the security of the region.

### **Relations with the Grand Mongol Khanate**

When Hulegu Khan was sent from Mongolia to the Middle East in 1253 by Mönke Khan (1251-1260), he was ordered to subjugate the territory and return later. Nevertheless, subsequent events led to Hulegu Khan not only becoming the full ruler of the occupied territories, but also the emergence of a new independent Mongol state. Even so, according to the majority of researchers, Hulegu Khan did not actually become an independent ruler of the state until the death of his brother Mönke Khan (1260), and that relation of subordination, albeit formal, remained until the rule of Ghazan Khan. The Ilkhanid rulers up to Ghazan Khan paid special attention to relation of subordination with the Great Mongol Khanate, even if it was formal, and even the power of some Ilkhans depended on Khanbalik. The coming to power of Ghazan Khan and his conversion to Islam did not affect these relations. Thus, when the previous Ilkhans came to power, in order to confirm the legitimacy of their authority, a seal and yarlig (payza) had to come from the palace, which was previously situated in Karagorum, and at the time of Kublai Khan (1260-1294), was in Beijing, and the names of the great khans had to be minted before the names of Ilkhans on coins. However, with the ascension of Ghazan Khan to the throne, this rule disappeared. According to T. Allsen's research, in the coins related to the reign of Ghazan Khan started to be used Muslim titles and did not mention the names of the Grand Mongol Khan. However, it is interesting that in 1302, Ghazan Khan mentioned the name of the Grand Mongol Khan in his letter to Pope Boniface VIII and used the traditional title of Ilkhan [Allsen (2001): 32]. It seems that Ghazan Khan had a political purpose in mentioning the name of the Great Mongol Khan here, and tried to present himself as the successor of his grandfather Genghis Khan in order to create influence in the Western world.

In the sources, there are some facts that Ghazan Khan continued positive political, economic and cultural relations with Mönke Temur (1294-1307), the Great Mongol Khan. Referring to a source dedicated to the history of the Chinese dynasty, T. Allsen discovered information about sending a soldier named Baiju to the Ilkhanid palace in 1296. Thus, according to the source, Ghazan Khan, who was impressed by the skills of Baiju, gave him a military position. Baiju in his turn served well and gained the ruler's trust. Even after his return to the Yuan palace, he was rewarded by Mönke Timur for his services [Allsen (2001): 34]. During this period, there are records of the sending of an embassy from Ilkhanate to Beijing. In 1297-1298, a delegation, consisting of the governor of Fars province Malik Fakhreddin Ahmad and Nogai (Tokay) Elchi, was sent by sea to the Great Mongol palace by Ghazan Khan. According to T. Allsen, the reason the messengers went by water was that the land route was dangerous due to the conflict between the Jagatais and Ogedeis in Central Asia [Allsen, (2001): 34]. The delegation, together with the valuable gifts, they brought with them, went to meet Mönke Teymur Khagan, who was sick near Khanbaliq [Özgüdenli (2009): 216, 29, 284]. The Mongol delegation, which stayed in the Yuan palace for about four years, was sent to the Ilkhanid palace by Mönke Teymur, along with a ship loaded with silk in exchange for the goods,

inherited by Hulegu Khan and an envoy of the great khan. According to “Tarikh-e Wassaf”, on the way back, because of reasons unknown to us, the ship carrying Nogai and the Khagan's envoy sank. Malik Fakhreddin died in 1305 [Ayati (1993): 284]. However, in his work, T. Allsen determined that Nogai and the Khagan's messenger named Yang Su arrived in Hormuz in 1307 [Allsen (2001): 34].

In accordance with the information given in the sources of the period, it can be said that after the conversion to Islam by Ghazan Khan, although he limited formal relations with the Great Mongol palace and did not attach importance to submission to their will, he did not interfere with the development of economic and cultural relations between the parties. On the contrary, economic and cultural ties between Beijing and Tabriz continued during this period, as in the days of previous Ilkhans.

### **Relations with the Byzantine Empire, the Papacy and Western European states**

The entry of the Mongols into the Middle East was an important event for the Christendom. In particular, as Hulegu Khan put an end to the Abbasid dynasty and his war with the Mamluks of Egypt created sympathy for the Mongols in the Christian West. In return, the Ilkhans tried to break the resistance of the Muslims in the region by establishing diplomatic relations with the Pope of Rome and other Western European states, especially with Byzantium. The elimination by the Mamluks of the crusader states such as Antakya, Tripoli, and Akka, created as a result of the crusades, as well as the actions of the Egyptian sultans, aimed to decrease the positions of the Mongols in the territories of the Anatolian Seljuk sultanate, were also factors that brought the Christian-Mongol alliance closer. Due to the mentioned reasons, since the time of Hulegu Khan, the Ilkhanate took the initiative to establish alliance with the Western world.

First of all, it should be noted that, as most researchers have rightly pointed out, the relations of the Ilkhanid state with the Christian-Western world were not widely reflected in the Muslim Eastern sources, and this factor did not allow for an in-depth study of the issue. The main reason of this was that in Muslim authors' opinion, Ilkhanid rulers, especially who accepted Islam, alliance with Christians (infidels) was not proper for a Muslim ruler [Boyle (1976): 27].

Among the Christian states, relations with the Byzantine Empire are the first to attract attention. Unfortunately, Byzantine-Ilkhanid relations, the subject of extensive research in the Western historiography, have not been sufficiently studied in Azerbaijani historiography. The analysis of a number of foreign studies suggests that the emergence and development of these relations are caused by various reasons. Thus, the Byzantine emperors, who carefully followed the events since the entry of the Mongols into the Middle East, implemented a policy of protecting themselves from Mongols and using this destructive force for their political interests. Especially during the time of Ghazan Khan, raids of the Turkmen tribes in Anatolia against Byzantium and their disobedience to the Ilkhanate government led to the unification of the two states in one front. Simultaneously, the riots that took place inside Byzantium and being attacked from various fronts caused them to look for an ally as the Ilkhanate.

There is no sufficient information about the relations with Byzantium during the reign of Ghazan Khan. Among the information that we have, the first to be noted is the request

of Alaeddin Keygubad III, who was at that time in the Byzantine palace, to replace Masud II, who was removed from the throne of the Rum Seljuk Sultanate in 1296, by the Ilkhanate [Özgüdenli (2009): 223 - 225]. Thus, Alaeddin III, brought from Constantinople to Tabriz, was elevated to the throne of the Rum Seljuk Sultanate in 1298.

The second information about relations with Byzantium is the arrival of ambassadors from Constantinople to Ghazan Khan's palace, who was in Kermanshah at that time. In 1302, during the preparations for the Syrian campaign, it is known that the Byzantine emperor wanted to establish alliances and even send his own daughter to marry the ilkhan [Sykes (1921): 190]. Historians, who pay attention to the fact that such an initiative took place in 1302, explain it by the fact that Byzantium was attacked from various directions on that date, it was defeated by the Ottomans in Goyluhisar [Donald (1972): 127]. In addition, the victory of Ghazan Khan in Syria encouraged the Byzantine court to make an alliance with the Mongols against the Turks, but this wish was not fulfilled. Although Ghazan Khan's response to the Byzantine envoys is not mentioned in the sources, his positive approach to the proposal is clear from subsequent information. John Boyle, referring to Pachymeres, a Byzantine historian, writes that apparently Ghazan Khan accepted this offer, but his death did not allow the alliance to continue until the end [Boyle (1976): 36].

It is clear from the information mentioned above that, like his predecessors, Ghazan Khan initiated the establishment of diplomatic relations beside Byzantium, with the Papacy and Western European states. Although we do not see this in the eastern sources of a chronicle nature, we can learn it in the works of Christian travelers and especially from the correspondence discovered in the archives at the beginning of the last century. From the letters, it is known that Ghazan Khan, like the previous ilkhans, took the initiative to create relations with the European states and make an alliance against the Egyptian Mamluks, and the attitude of the Western world towards this alliance was positive. Power of the Mamluks and the end of a number of Crusader states caused serious concern in the Christian world and caused them to attach importance to the alliance with the Ilkhanate.

In the following year, Ghazan Khan wrote a letter to the King of Cyprus, Henry II, in this context, and was disappointed that they could not march against the Mamluks together. According to P. Jackson, the king of Cyprus, Henry II, besieged Botru with two ships (galleys) in 1299 in order to cooperate with the Mongols, and rebuilt the fortress of Nef here. Amauri, the brother of the king of Cyprus, responded more seriously to the call of Ghazan Khan. In 1300, under his command, Cypriots and Knights Templar besieged Ruad, a small island in the coast of Tortosa, but the Mongols, led by Gutlughshah, did not come [Jackson (2005): 171]. Thus, joint action did not take place. Henry Howorth determined that the main reason for Gutlughshah's return was that he received the news of Ghazan Khan's illness [Howorth (1880): 456].

Ghazan Khan's victory over the Mamluks in the battle of Wadi al-Khazandar in 1299 was greeted with joy in the Western world and created a desire to establish an alliance with the Ilkhanate. King James II of Aragon (1291-1327) congratulated Ilkhan on his victory [Özgüdenli (2009): 229]. With that, the influence of the Ilkhans in the region and the short-term superiority over the Mamluks tempted the Venetians, who were lords of sea trade, to make an alliance with the Mongols. According to M.P. Pedani's research

[Maria Pia Pedani (1987-1988)], there were correspondences between the two parties. It is known from the author's research that in 1300, Ghazan Khan announced the victory over the Mamluks to the Doge of Venice and expressed his desire for alliance. In March of 1300, the Venetian senate, which was in the same position with the Mongols against the Mamluks, sent its representative to the Tartars (Mongols) with valuable gifts to congratulate Ghazan Khan on his victory. Marino Sanuto Torsello's report on situation in the Holy Land also confirms the existence of economic relations between the two sides this time. Marino Sanuto the Elder claims that it is possible to boycott Egypt by conducting trade with India through Persia (the territory of the Ilkhanate). In this case, it would be possible to gain an advantage for the Venetian merchants along the Euphrates towards the Syrian coast, weakening the infidels (Muslims-NN) and defeating the Genoese on the spice route [Maria Pia Pedani (1987-1988): 608-109].

Despite being a Muslim, Ghazan Khan continued the policy of his predecessors and even before the first Mamluk campaign, in 1298 he sent a letter to the French king Philip IV the Fair (1285-1314) with the idea of acting together against the Mamluks. Although the text of the letter has not survived, we assume that he, like his predecessors, encouraged the French king to send forces to liberate the Holy Land. Moreover, Buscarello de Ghizolfi, a Venetian merchant, who was sent to Europe in 1289 during the reign of Arghun Khan (1282-1291) with the aim of establishing diplomatic relations between the European kings and the Ilkhanate, was again appointed by Ghazan Khan for this purpose. In addition to conveying the information and congratulations from the west to the Ilkhan, in this diplomatic mission, beside Rome and Paris, he also went to meet the English king Edward I (1272-1307) in London and presented the letter of Ghazan Khan to the king. Unlike the letter sent by Ghazan Khan, the reply letter of Edward I has reached us. It is clear from the text of the letter that the English king expressed that the riots in Europe had ended and that the alliance with the Mongols against the Mamluks would be realized. However, this idea of Edward I was not accomplished due to the rebellion of Robert Bruce who revolted against him in Scotland [Özgüdenli (2009): 323].

Ghazan Khan also established relations with the Pope of Rome, leader of the Catholic Church. However, as mentioned, most of the eastern Muslim authors are silent about this in their works and do not share any information with us. The main reason for this was that the creation of an alliance against the Muslim states by a ruler, who had actually accepted Islam, was against religious and moral rules. Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) was among those who congratulated Ghazan Khan on his victory over the Mamluks, but the text of his letter has not reached us. However, the letter sent by Ghazan Khan to Boniface VIII from Azerbaijan, more precisely, from a place called Kushgapu (Kushkapisı -NN) by the Mongols near the present city of Shabran, on April 12, 1302, was discovered in the Vatican archives in 1921 and was studied by John Andrew Boyle [Boyle (1976): 38]. From what was written in the letter, the original text of which was analyzed by Mostart and Clevis, it is known that Ghazan Khan explained the invasion plan of Syria in detail to the Pope and European rulers and asked them to prepare their forces to start a war with their common enemy, the Mamluks of Egypt [Mostaert and Cleaves (1952): 469-471]. However, as with other European kings, relations with the Pope did not bring real political results. This can be explained mostly by the internal political

instability in Europe during this period and the disagreements of some the European rulers with Pope Boniface VIII [Özgüdenli (2009): 231].

## CONCLUSION

Thus, based on the traditional historiography of that period and modern historiography, it can be concluded that with the coming to power of Ghazan Khan, the diplomatic policy of his predecessors was continued, not taking into account some new points in the foreign policy of the Ilkhanate. The conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam did not give the expected results in foreign policy, especially against the Mamluks of Egypt and the Ulus of Juchi.

His campaigns against the Mamluk sultanate confirmed the attitude of the Mamluk sultans, who doubted his sincerity in converting to Islam. On the other hand, although relations with the Juchids improved, this could not change the fact that there was still no complete confidence in diplomatic activity between the parties. At the same time, despite the fact that Ghazan Khan strengthened and used Islam in every possible way, he intensified relations with the Christian world and Western Europe. In particular, it is known that attempts by Ghazan Khan to incite a number of Western European rulers to go on a crusade against the Mamluks of Egypt with the support by the Pope of Rome did not yield serious results.

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